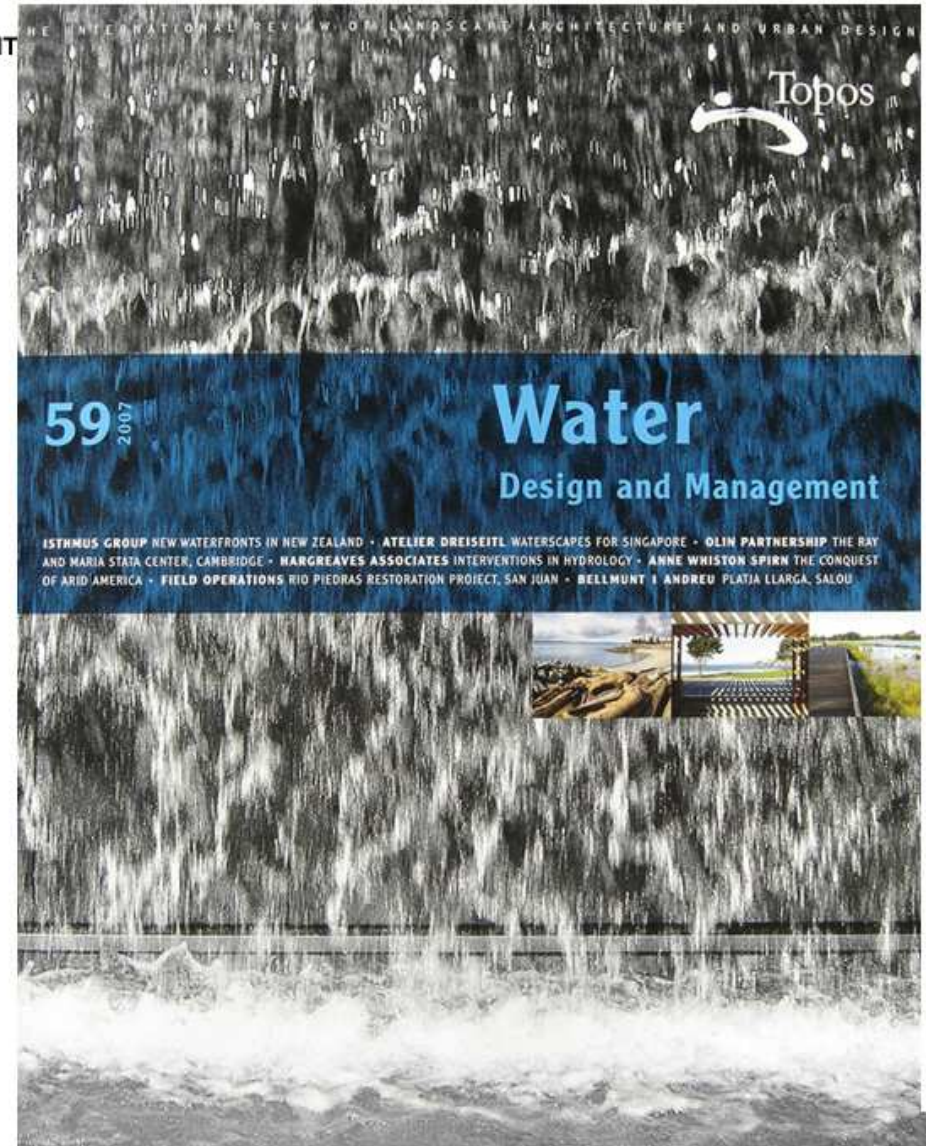


TOPOS
59. WATER, DESIGN & MANAGEMENT

82 84: TERMAS GEOMÉTRICAS

2007
CALLWEY VERLAG,
LINDAU, GERMANY.



82 84: TERMAS GEOMÉTRICAS

2007
CALLWEY VERLAG,
LINDAU, GERMANY.



TERMAS GEOMÉTRICAS

The architectural lines of the Termas Geométricas Hot Spring Complex in Chile reveal the Volcan Villarrica National Park's primitive and natural splendor.

Germán del Sol

An iron trunk was found intact by a friend, when diving and digging the remains of a Spanish galleon, containing among other things, a written chronicle on the Mapuche natives' long time search for a big golden treasure hidden in black boxes at the foot of Volcan Villarrica. Such tantalizing clues led to the discovery of 60 hot springs. Consequently, the area surrounding the springs, which are now part of the recent Termas Geométricas Hot Spring Complex, became known as Black Box Farm.

The complex is within the native forest of Volcan Villarrica National Park in Chile's southern Lake Country, 725 kilometers south of Santiago. The National Park is home to the Cathedral Araucaria Forest's splendid Monkey Puzzle tree. The tree's canopy and Araucarias are not mixed with shrubs or smaller trees, only a carpet of ferns grows underneath, leaving a wonderful empty space reminiscent of a forest cathedral.

On frequent cold, rainy, or snowy days a bath in clean and wild spring-fed pools maybe the best experience one can have. To make the most of it, there are 20 slate covered pools along the half mile stream; each is easy to reach via a wooden footbridge. Visitors may confidently

find a hidden pool and take a bath alone, or in good company, without running into one another. The hot springs' water is distributed to the pools through wooden conduits that run underneath the walkway, keeping it always dry and safe. Close to every pool there is a wooden pavilion with private bathrooms, locker rooms, and a deck for resting.

A big roof painted with wild grasses covers a space called "quincho". Here visitors are invited to stay by the open fire, look around in silence, or have a relaxed conversation with a cup of tea, a glass of mineral water, or a deli sandwich. Or, they can just enjoy the sunshine.

The Termas Geométricas Hot Spring Complex allows one to be seduced again by primitive elements. It is probably the architecture of decisive geometric lines that makes it possible to see and enjoy the good side of the unexpected events in nature. The constant movement of water and fire that always change, but go nowhere, appears in its entire natural splendor; the place is an invitation for visitors to remain calm. Thus it becomes a unique experience, a sensual rite of purification for the body and soul, by water and fire, which springs also from imagination.

TERMAS GEOMÉTRICAS, VILLARRICA, CHILE

Owner: Termas Geométricas Compañía

Architects: Germán del Sol (Lima/Perú)

Other Collaborators: Carlos Henríquez

Area: 1,500 m²

Cost: 1 million US dollars

Completion: 2006

Wooden footbridges link the 20 slate covered pools of the Termas Geométricas Hot Spring Complex. Each pool has small changing rooms, and a large grass-covered roof provides shade for resting visitors.

